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SMALL DIOCESES AND STATE CONVENTIONS.

SOME REMARKS

ON THE

POLITY

OF THE

Protestant Episcopal Church,

IN THE

UNITED STATES.

BY A LAYMAN.

"Choses serra faites per cesti qui ad plus skill a faire eux."

*"Taceo horridum illud et incomptum orationis genus, quo
tota haec materies involuta est."*

DETROIT:

J. WARREN, BOOK AND JOB PRINTER, 51 GRISWOLD ST.

1865.

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SMALL DIOCESES AND STATE CONVENTIONS.

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The attention of Churchmen has been called very often of late years to the subject of the proper arrangement and dimensions of dioceses, and much discussion has been had concerning it. As our Church differs from other religious bodies, in recognizing the necessity of what it regards as the scriptural division of orders, headed by the Episcopate, the proper conditions of that office are certainly of no small importance. Whatever can be made out to be the best-system, to secure the most advantage to religion from that office, is worthy of our most careful attention.

But nothing can be gained by putting any argument on a false foundation; and, when the friends of any measure confound that which is only policy—however pressing—with principle or doctrine, they place themselves in a false position, and provoke opposition which would not have arisen upon the real issue. It is getting to be too common for men to dogmatize on doctrines which are mere opinions, and to claim for what they set up as primitive usage on one subject, where nothing essential or universally important is involved, the same force which such usage, if genuine, would deserve as testimony upon some other and more important matter. Placing things of different value in the same class tends as readily to depreciate the one, as to raise the other; until true religion becomes overgrown with fungous parasites. The Scribes and Pharisees learned to be scrupulous about mint, anise and cummin, at the expense of mercy, judgment and faith. The Christian Church lost for a time its distinctive features, under a coating of fanciful mummeries, and Pagan superstitions and idolatries. Many sects, losing the guidance of a true polity, have had the truths of the gospel superseded by will-worship and human philosophy. These changes have often had their origin in the sincerity of good men, who have deviated from the safe way unwittingly, and who

would have shuddered, could they have foreseen in what bogs and deserts their new paths would end.

There has never been a time when our Church was receiving more accessions from outside bodies than now. They seek it, because they find that it has been enabled, by adhering to its scriptural foundations, to keep the faith inviolate. Its care to maintain a comely decorum in its outward forms and ceremonies has had much to do with attracting favorable attention to its more serious claims upon mankind. But there are many very pious and zealous members (and not always among the laity,) who repel sober and anxious inquirers, by the indiscreet prominence which they give in their discourse to the aesthetics of religion, and its externals. No doubt they would be shocked at the plain suggestion that they regarded the Gothic pattern of a Christian Church as the authorized successor of Solomon's Temple, or that the productions of a clerical tailor possessed any peculiar sanctity in their eyes. And yet we could easily pick out a dozen or two of intelligent people, who would find their sense of propriety severely tried by passing into the Sanctuary through a Norman Arch, or a square door, or by seeing a clergyman inside of a chancel in his gown. We cannot deny a weakness towards the Gothic ourselves, although not enlightened in our simplicity by the seven lamps of architecture. We have a due regard to the proprieties of sacerdotal dress, as generally received in this country; and believe there can be no more fitting vestment for solemn service than robes of fine linen,—if they are kept white and clean. But when these becoming things are magnified into the importance due to doctrines, those cannot be deemed altogether uncharitable, who complain of such notions as tendencies towards the unreformed Church of the dark ages. The children of the Church understand that nothing worse is generally involved in these extravagances than sentimentality or foppishness. But those who are not Churchmen do not see this so clearly; and assume that subjects which involve hot discussions in print, and occupy large portions of the columns of papers ostensibly devoted to religion, must have peculiar importance in the eyes of the faithful.

This tendency to claim undue importance for that which has not been made essential by scripture, and is not required by the

Church as conducive to good order, has led to the introduction of serious, and even bitter controversies, upon all sorts of indifferent or open questions; and some of the noblest of our Church ministers and dignitaries have been charged with being reckless about men's souls, because they do not see all subjects with the eyes of their flippant accusers. It is bad enough to have the Church disturbed by partisan warfare, upon those things, nearly resembling doctrines, upon which angry theologians get up disputes by using the same words in different senses from each other, disdaining to resort to a lexicon to end the strife they delight in. But it is hard to see what good can be done by quarreling about Church policy, when every one is interested in making it perfect and effective. There is room enough for good natured discussion, without calling names or stabbing reputations. It is much to be desired that the pugnacious individuals who have assumed to act as the Church's bull-dogs, should save their baying for her enemies.

That the size of bishoprics has never been fixed, except by human enactments, can hardly be questioned. It is equally true that there has been no general uniformity in this respect. Had there been any especial importance attached to the subject, there appears no adequate reason why any rule, once adopted, should have been disregarded. There is, however, good ground for believing that the extent of a Bishop's diocese has very generally, if not universally, coincided with some territorial division, within which the people had common interests, and were subject to common regulations. That this has ceased to be the case, to some extent, is probably true, in some countries besides our own. We shall not now consider how far these local arrangements have been departed from, nor inquire how they were devised. It is more important, in the present differences of opinion which prevail, to ascertain whether means cannot be discovered for enabling the merits of different plans, or their adaptedness to peculiar circumstances, to be fairly tested, without interfering with the general harmony of the Church at large.

All will agree that the first thing needful, under any plan, is to secure able and competent Bishops. Piety and learning are not the only requisites for the Episcopal office. A Bishop must, in addition to his saintly and scholarly qualities, have strength of

character, which will make him respected while he bears his honors meekly; he must have sound judgment, and a competent knowledge of human nature, or he will be unstable and easily imposed upon; he must be a gentleman, courteous and affable, that his people may love him as a good shepherd, and that those who are without may have no evil report to bring against him, and may be compelled to honor him as a citizen and a Christian, whether they like or dislike his tenets.

In this age of the world, and in a country like ours, a diocese must be large enough to furnish a reliable maintenance to the Bishop and his family, enabling them to live in decency and comfort, and leaving him free from sordid cares. It should be large enough to furnish work for a respectable number of clergy, in the care of souls, that some proportion may be maintained among the various orders, and that all may have constant and adequate employment. A Church which has neither State subsidies nor large funded revenues, must find its support among the people, and must accommodate itself somewhat to means and circumstances. And, as the laborers are not enough for the harvest, it would not be wise to encourage any to leave the field. No parish should obtain superfluous aid, and no place should have idle or half-employed clergy, when promising fields are unsupplied, and important parishes are left unprovided for.

Mere size, therefore, cannot be any test of the proper extent of a Bishop's jurisdiction. It must depend somewhat on the number of parishes, or stations, where churches are planted or needed, and somewhat on the resources in men and means, which can be relied upon for upholding the Church and the ministry. In some regions a very small field will support and find abundant work for a Bishop. In others the jurisdiction must extend over a wide territory, or the office must be left vacant;—that is, there must be no Episcopal Church. Such has always been one of the necessities of the case, and there is no reason to anticipate that it can ever be otherwise.

Neither can the number of parishes, nor their wealth or population, always determine the size of a See. We have cities more populous than States; but to introduce several Bishops in any of them would not tend to harmony. And, whatever may be our

solicitude, it is altogether likely that we must always have some dioceses inconveniently large, with few people, and some very small dioceses inconveniently crowded. But there is a very wide difference between having a Bishop with a diocese too unwieldy, from any cause, for his decent management, and the somewhat Presbyterian extreme of making a diocese out of what should be a parish. No disputant is willing to own that he is in favor of either of these antipodal plans. It is worth our while, if possible, to keep matters on such a footing, that, while every opinion may be fairly canvassed, and fairly and dispassionately tried by its merits, (if strong enough to prevail in any locality,) the general interests may at the same time be preserved from injury. If the action of a State, or locality, in determining the size and arrangement of its own dioceses, could not affect the interests or security of other regions, it is not to be presumed that any one outside of its limits would object to such action. But, so far as such a course has any bearing upon other interests, those who may be affected have a perfect right to criticise measures, and to oppose them if deemed objectionable. We do not propose in our present remarks to weigh the arguments on either side of the *See* question, nor to present them all, but only to refer to some of the reasons which have been urged against any considerable subdivision of dioceses, in order to discover whether they can be made less urgent by any means attainable.

The principal objections apply in part to the effect such changes may have upon the Episcopal office itself, and partly to the effect on the general interests of the Church at large, which may arise out of a multiplication of Bishops and Dioceses.

No one can fail to perceive that the entire Church is deeply interested in the character of every Bishop. In the Councils of the Church, each is the equal of every other, and has the same voice in determining all questions acted upon. The clergy he ordains retain their clerical character everywhere. He stands before every community as the highest representative of the Church, and if he is unsound in doctrine, or cold in religion, or worldly or vicious in life, or offensive in demeanor, the odium falls upon the entire Church of which he is a chief standard-bearer. Enemies find in such a prelate a legitimate cause for assailing the Church

of which he is a lawful head, and supposed guide and leader. The evil which results to the entire Church, from the scandal incurred by an unworthy Bishop, is so great, and so inevitable, that no one can doubt the necessity of guarding the office, as far as may be, from the danger of having it improperly filled. Such things, therefore, as concern the well-being and honor of the Episcopate, cannot be considered as of mere local interest, and require the earnest vigilance of all.

It has been objected, with some force, to the scheme of small bishoprics, that if a Bishop is confined within a contracted diocese, and assumes, as is proposed, a daily personal supervision over his clergy, he will be in danger of becoming headstrong, narrow-minded, and tyrannical. The general introduction of such a system has been sometimes supposed likely to restore the tendencies of the collegiate or monastic systems, which have not been generally considered by the Protestant world as very fruitful in the spread of true religion and godliness, among the people at large, or among the clergy themselves. It is good for clergy and people to be let alone in their ordinary work, and to be thrown on their own resources, as far as possible. The oversight of a Bishop should indeed be continuous, but there is a great difference between quiet vigilance, applying warning and encouragement as they are needed, and that fidgety intermeddling which almost all human nature is impelled to indulge in, when the adviser thinks his way is best, in little things as well as great,—forgetful that others, on whom the burden is cast, may not be able to follow his way, or do as well as he thinks he would have done in their places. There are great diversities of gifts, and, except where principle is involved, experience has shown that every man works best in his own way. The want of endowments will prevent the aggregation of many clergy into one household, or even one body, separate from parish work; and so much of this sort of difficulty will be saved, at all events. But the principle is attended with some danger, under any circumstances. Angelic tempers and apostolic meekness are rarely attained in this world. Even between Rectors and their assistants, the Christian graces of patience and forbearance become a little strained, at times. And if a Bishop is daily called on to decide between opposing views, or is frequently

required to harmonize other disputes, the risk to his own temper is by no means small. And the experience of the Christian world has shown very plainly that arbitrary dispositions, without some very efficient counter checks, are very much in danger of running into false doctrine and pernicious practices. The great men of small communities are notoriously conceited, obstinate, and bigoted. This is quite as true of isolated Church organizations, and those who preside over them. Whatever removes a man in authority from free access to healthy public opinion, diminishes his vitality in usefulness. And it would be contrary to fact, to assume that the things which operate on men generally do not warp the characters of earnest ecclesiastics. When they are in the habit of following their own devices unchecked, they are apt to think more of the machinery devised by themselves, to do what they call church work, than of the means inherited by the Church, to do its appointed task of cleansing and converting the world. We hear now and then, through our church papers, or by report, of an illustration of this danger, in some hard-headed rector, who magnifies his office at least to the extent of one order, and makes his parochial diocese odious to all others, by treating them more uncivilly than if they were schismatics from his pastoral fold; being, meanwhile, quite oblivious himself of any ecclesiastical authority outside of his surplice. How far these dangers exist in any serious proportion, men cannot be expected to agree; neither will they agree as to how much may be found of good to counterbalance them. Those who anticipate such troubles will, of course, augur much evil from them.

Another difficulty sometimes spoken of is the inferior character of the Bishops likely to be chosen, where they are numerous. The danger here is supposed to arise from two sources. These are the scanty supply of material, and the danger of combinations to secure success by unworthy means.

That there must always be in the Church, somewhere, men enough to perform worthily all of her offices, we may safely assume; although the number of great rulers must always be limited. Even in war, it takes some time for the true "ruler of men" to find his place; and, in the quiet labors of his parish, the great-hearted man does not always make his light shine before the

public elsewhere. His work, indeed, is not lost, even in obscurity ; and he will not sleep less soundly, because he is not put in a higher seat. But there may be danger, so long as a diocese is susceptible of further subdivision, that those who cannot have their own way may discover sooner than others that the Bishop cannot attend to all the needs of the Church, and that a division is necessary for the general good. Christian zeal, sharpened by adequate motives, becomes very zealous indeed ; and quiet towns awaken suddenly to their eminent fitness for an Episcopal seat, and speak of it with an unction worthy of a newly-opened oil region. Moreover, where the necessity for a division is not plain to all candid minds, pecuniary disputes, and doubts of motives for the separation, may create unseemly and continual bitterness. Where churches divide in anger, the consequence is deplorable.

But the case may arise where the candidates are beyond cavil, and the field is large enough, and the means are ample. In such cases none of the objections just named can apply, and the only questions open to consideration relate to general policy, and the interests of the Church at large, beyond the single diocese.

The natural agreement between Churchmen in the same neighborhoods on questions of policy, where party has not divided them, will be quite likely to induce the multiplication of small dioceses in the same State or vicinity, after they have once agreed upon the policy of division. Under the present constitution of the Church, each one of these new dioceses will have, not only its Bishop in the House of Bishops, but, also, its clerical and lay delegates in the Lower House. This must tend to produce certain serious natural consequences. The representation of one region must greatly outnumber that of another less populous ; and, where different sections are equally populous, the example of subdivision, introduced by one, must at least tempt a similar policy in the other, whether desirous of it or not, in order to keep up a balance of influence. There is no reason, or fair occasion, for sectional quarrels in the Church ; but such a system must greatly tend to bring them about, for it is not in human nature to have power and not use it. Again, the House of Delegates must, under such a system, become numerous and unwieldy. The selection of members must become less careful. The sense of responsibility in

very large bodies becomes lessened, and there is a much greater disposition in members to make themselves noisy and conspicuous. In secular legislative bodies, the machinery of party moderates individual extravagance to some extent; but such a remedy in the Church is not quite as desirable, or harmless, as in worldly affairs. Parties are rendered essential—with all their evils—in temporal affairs, by the changing policies of human institutions. In the Church they are unmixed evils. Legislation by such unwieldy bodies is crude and hasty, and not thoroughly understood by each member. The habit arises of trusting important work to committees; and the result shows that dangerous and offensive innovations can be so engineered through these cumbrous bodies, that the mischief is not discovered until it is accomplished. Power entrusted to very large assemblies is almost sure to become practically centralized, in any knot of politicians, or schemers, who may organize their forces thoroughly for that end.

There is another very serious danger attending this minute subdivision of dioceses, if they are allowed their full share of representation. When a large diocese is troubled by unruly members, those who are in the minority may desire to separate, and those in the majority may be glad to be rid of them, and a separation may be resorted to as the shortest road to peace. But in such case what is the result? In each diocese there is one prevailing theory or policy, which may be well enough, or at least harmless, if quietly maintained, but which ought not to become a shibboleth. When made a ground of separation, it at once overtops all other things; and each diocese becomes the peculiar champion of its own side. We have had some illustrations of party bitterness between dioceses, where by accident—or at least not by settled design—similar differences have arisen, because opinions prevailing in one have not prevailed in another. These differences have been fomented, and have led to exaggerated notions on both sides, or at least to exaggerated language. Persons acting judicially have been supposed—it is fair to hope uncharitably—of having yielded more or less to such jealousies and feelings. What can we expect, when smaller and more homogeneous bodies, with less nearly balanced constituents, become champions of conflicting sides? If some of these small bodies should not

produce heresies and schisms, it would be a most marvellous thing. And a single lapse of a diocese into fatal error would strike a blow at the Church, which it would take ages to heal.

Whatever may be the prevailing opinion on the policy of small dioceses, there is no likelihood that there will be anything like unanimity in favor of it, until it shall have been sufficiently approved by results. Nor, under the present constitution, is it any more likely that it will be thoroughly tried. It seems generally supposed that some further changes in the constitution will be needed; and the idea of dividing up the country into Provinces, has been spoken of, partly to avoid inconvenience from a multitude of dioceses, and partly on independent grounds.

In the discussions which have been had on both topics, it seems to have been forgotten that the founders of our American Church made provision for both objects, in the simplest and most satisfactory way possible. By the original Constitution, no diocese as such was represented in the House of Delegates. The representatives in that body were all chosen by State Conventions. It was evidently contemplated that in the course of time single States might find it expedient to divide into dioceses of smaller extent; and, so long as it did not affect their representation in the General Convention, their domestic action could not be objected to by any outside persons or Churches. The Union of the Church preceded the existence of dioceses, in several States which were represented, and was the result of State Conventional action entirely. For many years there was but one diocese in Northern New England, Bishop Griswold having, within the "Eastern Diocese," several State Conventions, which afterwards became the organs of separate dioceses. Had the old Constitution remained unchanged, and had the States become subdivided, as many doubtless would have been, the House of Bishops would have been enlarged, but the House of Delegates would not have increased beyond the proportion due to new States. There is no great danger that the upper House will become unwieldy, and they are not likely to incur suspicions or jealousies, to any great extent, so long as no important action can be had without the concurrence of the Deputies. The change in the Constitution, which was adopted to allow Western New York to be represented as a diocese, was therefore a radical change,

which altered the entire theory of the Church Union. Its full significance was not then seen; for the Church and the Country had not yet attained the full consciousness of their vigorous growth. The new diocese was large and prosperous, and no one doubted that it was sufficient for a Bishop's entire care. No practical inconvenience resulted from the course taken at the time. But this amendment led, almost of necessity, to the introduction of further changes, some of which have engendered no small amount of difficulty; and made it the duty of the General Convention to decide, in every instance, whether a diocese should be divided; and made the division, which ought to rest on its own intrinsic merits, subject to be defeated, on grounds of policy, by other dioceses which may fear the effect on themselves, or on their standing and influence in the Convention. The introduction of these topics cannot fail, at some time, to create such dissensions as the Church has never yet seen; unless men's natures change more than usual. The judicial power, which was never before vested in the American Church at large, has in its exercise led to painful exhibitions; and it is a fact that, in every trial held thus far, the action of the Court has been assailed, and the acquittal, the conviction, and the sentence, cannot be relied on as determining, to the universal acquiescence, the guilt or innocence of the accused. Where the decisions of Courts are not accepted with respect by at least an overwhelming majority of the community, and where any considerable number of people allow themselves habitually to question the motives and impartiality of the Bench of judgment, the moral power of the law is destroyed, and the judicial system becomes useless. The Church has gained nothing by being compelled to provide in General Convention for the trial of Bishops;—although the necessity of having the power, until some adequate provision could have been made otherwise, is apparent enough. But it is equally apparent that, for some reason or other, the working of the system has not been satisfactory. Whether the evil has sprung from the changed system, or from causes which would have worked mischievously at all events, it may be hard to determine. It is at least one of the consequences which have attended the change.

Previous to the amendment in question, the only subjects which

were expressly referred to the General Convention were uniformity of ritual and of orders. The enforcement of penal discipline was confined to the States. Each State Convention could regulate the size of its own dioceses, and make full provision for its own necessities, without consulting or disturbing others. So long as the doctrine discipline and worship were preserved inviolate, the course of affairs was governed altogether by the views and wishes of those immediately concerned.

By the important amendments of 1838, the State Conventions, as such, ceased to exist; and no Constituent body was recognized except the diocese. Churches within the same State ceased to have of necessity any immediate ecclesiastical connection with each other, and might remain in all things, as separate as if they were in distant States. Any effectual union, for purposes of mutual interest or policy, was made substantially impossible. And, so long as dioceses are represented as such in the General Convention, it is not desirable that they should be at liberty to make combinations together, in the imperfect way which might be practicable. Such unauthorized and irregular combinations would have some tendency to destroy the independent and untrammelled action which the Church has a right to expect, from every delegation in the convention. They would at least tend to favor such arrangements as would easily degenerate into intrigue and corruption. Where, on the other hand, there was but a single State delegation, all of its dioceses might legitimately meet in the State Convention, and consult and act for their mutual welfare, without affording any cause of offense or jealousy.

The amendments of 1838, by bringing under the control of the General Convention some matters which were before clearly under the control of State Conventions, introduced a necessity for legislating on several vexatious topics. When the door was once opened, a disposition became manifested, which is constantly increasing (as such things always increase) to make and alter Canons without necessity, and to legislate too much and too minutely. In the multitude of schemes discussed in the Convention, there are always some beyond its proper jurisdiction; and it would be a wonder if Canons did not occasionally, at least, exceed the powers of the Convention. There can be no doubt it has more than once

trenched on diocesan authority. All who have paid any attention to the history of legislation, in the United States, have been struck by the deplorable uncertainty of Statute Law, and the heedlessness of legislators in regard to Constitutional limits. Ignorance of existing laws, and forgetfulness of Constitutions, lead to conflicting, crude, and improper legislation; and this, in its turn, tempts many to despise and disregard the laws of the land. The changes of the law lead the law-makers themselves to undervalue stability, and to chafe at the few restraints imposed upon them by the organic law. The public sentiment becomes misled, as official action becomes corrupted or reckless. The political philosopher who reckons up the causes of those disturbances in public sentiment which lead, at times, to a disregard for legal boundaries, may undoubtedly find many of them springing from that tendency to over legislation, which has so peculiarly marked our country. No general rule of law can be safely altered, until there has been time to reflect upon it in all its bearings, and to adjust the new law to all circumstances likely to affect or to be affected by it. The most intelligent debate will not always suffice to bring out all the considerations necessary to its perfection. Still less will these be presented properly, when, as often happens, the subject is one which has never been forced upon the general attention, and has only been considered by the author of the new Statute, who has looked at it from a single point of view, and perhaps been warped by prejudice or feeling.

The necessity for new legislation can never be as common in the Church as in the State. The changing circumstances in human affairs which require statutes to be remodelled, generally affect interests in property, or personal security; and it is undeniable that human policy may sometimes require very radical changes. But the interests of the Church being chiefly spiritual, and its fundamental laws being beyond human alteration or improvement, the occasions for new legislation are comparatively few, and rarely of vital consequence. Churches may flourish—as they have flourished in some parts of the old world—with no new legislation. The Church of England has more vitality now than at some former periods, nearer the origin of such laws as have long governed her. Some changes in our Canons have been made

necessary by changes in the constitution. Passing by the propriety of the constitutional changes, and conceding the propriety of harmonizing the Canons accordingly, it would be difficult to show that the Church is better off to-day for its other frequent canonical changes than it would be without them, unless it has gained by the discipline in patience, which some of its members have undergone in trying to comprehend them. Yet no one needs to be reminded how much time has been absorbed, at every Convention, by the eloquence and pertinacity of Canon Doctors, who have been anxious to indoctrinate their brethren with their new and valuable ideas, and to become the Justinians whose text may be a canvas for all future artists in commentary. What is still worse, it is certainly a rare thing for a Convention to adjourn without some proposition to alter the Constitution. That instrument has not been treated with the respect due to a fundamental law. Some very good—but unfortunately very uneasy men, seem actuated by a constant desire of enlarging the functions of the Convention, or fixing that which might better be left at large. This desire of change, which is not peculiar to any one class of minds, is only dangerous when men lose sight of the evils of having fundamental regulations fluctuating. It is much safer to change laws than Constitutions, because legislation is always expected to be more or less subject to temporary policies, and to fluctuating public opinion. Constitutions are supposed to be, and should be, the settled will of the people, to restrain themselves as well as their representatives from the dangers of acting under sudden excitement; and the idea of stability is of great value, as such a check. And wise men have for this reason made Constitutions as general, and as free from what may be termed “Legislation,” as possible. A few years’ experience, under a Constitution filled with special legislation, has generally satisfied the afflicted community of the wisdom of going back to simpler rules.

An examination into the original Church Constitution, as compared with its present form, will show that we have completely changed the design and character of the Convention; and the amendments of 1838 were the chief instruments in the revolution. It was never designed by the framers of the Constitution that the General Convention should exercise any extensive powers of

legislation, or have any frequent occasion for it. The Constitution, which was perfected in 1789, was framed during the transition period of the Union from a confederation to a government. The whole theory of government was discussed at that time, with a thoroughness which has never been surpassed. The change from the Articles of Confederation to the Constitution was as radical as possible. The subjects left under the regulation of the Union were substantially the same in both. But the Constitution gave Congress authority to enforce its will, by the ordinary ministers of a Government, and created executive and judicial departments entirely independent of the States. With these models before them, the founders of the American Church deliberately followed the plan of the Articles of Confederation. They provided for State Conventions which should be represented equally in the General Convention. They recognized no executive power except in the State Conventions themselves. They gave to the General Convention no coercive powers, but left all legal proceedings to be regulated by the State Conventions. We have Bishop White's authority for saying, (what is perfectly apparent from the Constitution itself,) that no effort to give judicial power to the Church at large could have succeeded. The powers vested in the National Church were few and specific. They were to provide for meetings of the Convention, to regulate the qualifications and admission of candidates for orders, to admit delegates from States not before represented, and to adopt a book of Common Prayer, and the necessary forms and regulations for sacred rites and worship. These things are essential to any intimate union between churches. No other subject was referred to, and no person, board, committee, or other organization, except the State Conventions, was provided for to perform any Church work. The objects proposed were such as were not calculated to call for much action. A Prayer Book once established must of necessity be permanent, in all its essentials at least. The qualifications of the ministry ought not to be changed, after the proper standard has been approved. And when these things have been determined on, and ratified, the only further purpose to be subserved by such a Convention must be to keep up the fraternal intercourse which is needful, and to see that the standards are preserved in their integ-

